

# ***D4 WESTport***

**March 2006**

Welcome to the March edition of **WESTport**, MoDOT District 4's newsletter to our Missouri General Assembly members, city and county officials, and other transportation partners from the west central region.

You will receive monthly updates of District 4 projects and activities throughout the regular General Assembly session, and periodic updates during the rest of the year. We hope you will find the information useful and enlightening.

Our District 4 staff is always available to answer your questions and address constituent concerns. See our list of contacts at the bottom of this newsletter for telephone numbers and other information, or visit our district website at [www.modot.org/kansascity/](http://www.modot.org/kansascity/)

## **Fairfax Bridge Repairs Take Just Three Days**

The Fairfax Bridge, which carries the southbound lanes of Route 69 from Missouri into Kansas, reopened just three days after closing for urgent repairs. The closure was initially expected to last as long as three weeks.

MoDOT crews closed the 72-year-old bridge for repairs on Monday, February 6. Traffic headed for the Fairfax District in Kansas City, Kan., was detoured to the nearby Interstate 635 bridge and then east on Kansas Route 5. The structure carries about 7,500 vehicles per day.

Repairs went much faster than anticipated, according to Chris Redline, assistant district engineer. Crews were working on the lower chord of a large truss that was a significant distance from the ground, and their experience on similar jobs led them to expect a variety of challenges.

"Removing the rivets was not as difficult as our crews expected, so the work took a fraction of the time we estimated," Redline said.

On January 11, MoDOT restricted bridge traffic to vehicles weighing 10 tons or less after routine inspections revealed that splice plates on lower sections of a truss had developed cracks. Crews installed new splice plates while the bridge was closed, and the 10-ton weight restriction has been removed.

"We were delighted to reopen the bridge so quickly," Redline said. "That's the kind of surprise we like to enjoy with our customers."

## **I-435 Bridge Rehabilitation Under Way**

While it doesn't qualify as an Extreme Makeover, District 4's rehabilitation project on the Interstate 435 Missouri River bridge represents the latest MoDOT effort to rehabilitate and refurbish the region's river crossings.

"Over the last 10 years, we've been working to repair and repaint our metropolitan-area river bridges on a regular basis," District Engineer Beth Wright said. "In addition to last year's Paseo Bridge repairs, we've painted the Broadway Bridge, and repainted and rehabbed the Fairfax and Platte Purchase and the old Route 291 bridge. We also have new river bridges open on Route 65 and Route 13. Keeping our river crossings in good repair is a major challenge for us, but it's a crucial part of our work."

Rehabilitation of the Interstate 435 bridge over the Missouri River closed the structure's right northbound lane beginning March 1. The one-lane reduction is expected to continue until at least May 21, and marks the beginning of a \$21 million project that will complete structural repairs and place a new driving surface on the bridge. Other lane closures in either direction will follow throughout the summer and fall, with project completion expected by the fall of 2007. The bridge will be open to three-lane traffic in each direction for the 2006-2007 winter months.

"This is the metropolitan area's busiest river crossing, so commuters and other travelers may want to consider another route for their commute," Wright added.

The 34-year-old bridge accommodates approximately 100,000 vehicles (50,000 in each direction) on an average day. The project was accelerated with Amendment 3 funding.

## **Route A Bridge Replacement Began in February**

Construction began February 9 to replace the Route A bridge over Wakenda Creek about three miles west of Stet and the Ray/Carroll County line.

Boone Construction Company of Columbia should complete the \$539,000 project by mid-June 2006.

The 74-year-old bridge closed to traffic November 2, 2005, when a MoDOT inspection revealed the timber-pile substructure had deteriorated and was being crushed under the weight of the bridge. The old bridge, which included a concrete deck and steel beams on top of the timber substructure, carried about 300 vehicles per day.

The signed detour directs motorists east on Route W, south on Route JJ (Northeast County Line Road) and west on Route K.

## **Destination: Safe Targets Unbuckled Drivers**

Young cowboys may be considered cool, but a cowboy attitude on Missouri highways is driving up the serious injury and fatality collision rates.

Statewide Arrive Alive and local Destination: Safe campaigns have launched a media drive to reduce the trend, targeting young, male, pickup-drivers who often fail to buckle their seat belts. If you've heard the message on a country, rock or sports radio station lately, or have seen a billboard, you know the word is getting out.

Destination: Safe in the Kansas City region is among eight area coalitions across the state that are working toward the same goal – reducing Missouri traffic fatalities to 1,000 or fewer by 2008.

Statewide, we haven't turned the corner. Preliminary data indicate Missouri had 1,215 fatalities in 2005 compared to 1,130 fatalities the year earlier. Missouri has not had fewer than 1,000 traffic fatalities since 1993, when 949 people were killed.

In the Kansas City region, the trend appears better. Preliminary numbers indicate fatalities are down nearly 10 percent in the metropolitan area, and down nearly 9 percent in the larger Kansas City region over the past five years, with declines in each of the past four years.

The statewide campaign, launched last fall, includes billboards throughout Missouri showing a pickup that has rolled on its top, with the phrase, "Pickups Rock. They Also Roll. Buckle Up!" The billboard can be found on the southeast side of the Downtown Loop in District 4, but anyone who's traveled a Missouri interstate highway within the past three months will have seen the billboard at many other locations, too.

The statewide campaign also aired radio spots on a wide variety of District 4 stations, including WDAF-FM (country), KPRS AM and FM (urban), KOKO-AM KDKD-AM and FM and KMMO-AM and FM in the Warrensburg, Clinton and Marshall markets.

Destination: Safe, the Kansas City regional campaign, is focusing sharply on young males who listen to country, rock or sports stations, extending the ad campaign into early April on: KXXK-FM (Sedalia/Warrensburg country format); KCFX-FM (Harrisonville/Kansas City classic rock and sports); KFKF-KBEQ 104 (Kansas City country format) and WHB-AM (sports talk and Royals radio flag station).

The intense media buy -- targeted to end just as Work Zone Safety campaigns are to begin -- also includes indoor advertising, the 8-by-12-inch billboards seen in the bathrooms of restaurants and bars. Special funding is available to extend the media campaign to television spots this winter and spring.

Child Passenger Safety week, another target of the statewide and local campaigns, will feature ads and spots urging motorists to secure children in approved safety seats and booster seats, not leave children unattended in cars and watch out for children who may be in the vast blind zones around vehicles.

## **Route 58 Bridge Repairs Begin March 15**

MoDOT will close the Route 58 bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad at Centerview beginning March 15 to repair slides, rebuild shoulders, repair the bridge deck, replace guardrail and coldmill and resurface the mainline pavement at Route 58. The Johnson County highway will be closed approximately 60 days.

Highway traffic will detour to Route 50 to Route 131 to Route 58. Local traffic will continue to have access to Centerview from Route 58 Spur south of the closure and from Route VV north of the closure. MoDOT also will resurface Route 58 Spur into Centerview as part of the project, resulting in one or two days of traffic restrictions or periodic detours.

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